

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 230942Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4124

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 10995

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS IN WAKE OF PARK ASSASSINATION
ATTEMPT

REF: TOKYO 10925

SUMMARY: GOJ HAS FURTHER SOFTENED POSITION ON RESPONSIBILITY
FOR PARK ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND FORMALLY EXPRESSED
REGRET THAT PREPARATIONS FOR ATTEMPT "APPARENTLY" TOOK PLACE IN
JAPAN. AT SAME TIME FRICTION BETWEEN ROK AND JAPANESE POLICE
AUTHORITIES HAS BEGUN TO DEVELOP OVER CONDUCT OF
INVESTIGATION. VALUE OF PRIME MINISTER TANAKA'S
ATTENDANCE AT PARK FUNERAL SOMEWHAT VITIATED BY SNUB TO
KIM CHONG-PIL DURING VISIT.

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT HAS CAST PALL OF EMBARRASSMENT
AND DISCOMFORT OVER ALREADY DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP. FULL
IMPACT DIFFICULT TO ASSESS BECAUSE MANY RECENT
DEVELOPMENTS CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT. FOR TIME BEING,
WHILE OUTLINES OF GOJ POLICY UNCHANGED, JAPANESE
EMBARRASSMENT WILL FORCE GOJ TO SOFT PEDAL DEMANDS
ON ROK, PARTICULARLY ON KIM DAE-JUNG CASE.

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1. FURTHER REACTION TO KIM CHONG-PIL STATEMENT. GOJ MOVED AUG 22 TO SOFTEN FURTHER POSITION ON JAPANESE RESPONSIBILITY IN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. SPEAKING AT MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARY VICE MINISTERS REPORTED IN PRESS PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN VICE MINISTER YAMADA CRITICIZED AS "INAPPROPRIATE" STATEMENT MADE EARLIER BY FONOFF REPRESENTATIVES THAT JAPAN NOT IN POSITION TO TAKE LEGAL OR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. EARLIER STATEMENT HAD NOT BEEN "OFFICIAL COMMENT", AND HAD BEEN MADE WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS. LATER IN DAY, VICE MINISTER TOGO MADE FORMAL ATTRIBUTED STATEMENT OF REGRET TO PRESS CONFERENCE THAT PREPARATIONS FOR ATTEMPT ON PRESIDENT PARKS'S LIFE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN MADE IN JAPAN. TOGO TOLD NEWSMEN HIS VIEWS ON EARLIER STATEMENT "ABOUT THE SAME" AS YAMADA'S.

2. POLICE INVESTIGATIONS. NORTHEAST ASIA DIV DIRECTOR SEO TOLD EMBOFF THAT BY END OF LAST WEEK POLICE CONVINCED THAT MRS. YOSHII INVOLVED IN PASSPORT FRAUD, BUT STILL COULD NOT BE SURE OF EXTENT TO WHICH SHE AWARE OF HIS INTENTIONS. POLICE BELIEVE THAT MUN AND MRS. YOSHII WERE LOVERS. THEY ARE NOT CONVINCED THEREFORE THAT TRIP TO HONG KONG WAS NECESSARILY FOR PURPOSE OF BUYING GUN, NOR THAT MR. YOSHII WAS PART OF CONSPIRACY AS MAINTAINED IN MUN CONFESSION. NORTH KOREAN SHIP ON WHICH MUN AND PYONGYANG AGENT ALLEGED TO HAVE PLOTTED ASSASSINATION WAS INDEED IN HARBOR MAY 4 AND 5, BUT IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES HAVE NO RECORD OF MUN BOARDING. SUCH NEGATIVE EVIDENCE INCONCLUSIVE, HOWEVER, SINCE MUN COULD HAVE USED ANOTHER NAME ON ANY VISIT TO SHIP.

3. AFTER INITIAL PERIOD OF CLOSE COOPERATION, SEO SAID JAPANESE POLICE FINDING ROK AUTHORITIES INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH. BASIC PROBLEM IS ROK INSISTENCE THAT JAPANESE PROCEED ON BASIS OF MUN CONFESSION, AND JAPANESE BELIEF THAT CONFESSION ALONE NOT ENOUGH AND HARD EVIDENCE REQUIRED. UNLESS FURTHER EVIDENCE EMERGES FROM EITHER INTERROGATION OF MRS. YOSHII, OR INVESTIGATION OF OSAKA GUN THEFT, JAPANESE FEEL THEY UNABLE TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION
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AGAINST ANYONE OTHER THAN MRS. YOSHII. POLICE EMBARRASSED ABOUT THIS AND FRUSTRATED AT APPARENT ROK UNWILLINGNESS TO INTERROGATE MUN FOR FURTHER EVIDENCE.

4. TANAKA ATTENDANCE AT FUNERAL. ACCORDING TO SEO, WHO RECEIVED ACCOUNT FROM PRIME MINISTER ON PLANE WHEN RETURNING FROM SEOUL, NEWSPAPER STORIES OF 30-MINUTE MEETING WITH PARK WERE ESSENTIALLY CORRECT.

MOST IMPORTANT BIT OF SUBSTANCE WAS PARK'S REQUEST THAT GOJ COOPERATE IN INVESTIGATION AND CLAMP DOWN ON CHOSOREN AND OTHER ANTI-PARK ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN, AND TANAKA'S REPLY THAT HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WITHIN CONTEXT OF JAPANESE LAW.

5. PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOLD SEO ON PLANE ABOUT HIS REFUSAL TO MAKE OFFICE CALL ON PREMIER KIM (REFTEL).

6. COMMENT: THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND ITS AFTERMATH HAVE CAST A PALL OF EMBARRASSMENT AND DISCOMFORT OVER A ROK-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP THAT WAS DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO BEGIN WITH. THE FINAL IMPACT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO ASSESS, HOWEVER, SINCE MANY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT. WE UNDERSTAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TANAKA'S EXTRAORDINARY GESTURE IN GOING TO FUNERAL WAS GENUINELY APPRECIATED IN SEOUL. AT THE SAME TIME, HIS REFUSAL TO DO BUSINESS WITH PREMIER KIM DONG-JO COULD WELL HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS A SNUB BY ONE OF THE FEW OFFICIALS IN ROKG HIGHLY PLACED ENOUGH TO DO SOME GOOD. THE LATEST FONOFF STATMENT ON JAPANESE RESPONSIBILITY MAY WELL PLACATE THE ROKG ENOUGH TO BRING THE DEMONSTRATIONS TO AN END BUT CONSIDERABLE TIME WILL BE REQUIRED TO ERASE THE GRACELESSNESS OF THE ORIGINAL ASSERTION. THE POLICE AUTHORITIES OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS WORKED WELL TOGETHER AT THE OUTSET, BUT ARE REACHING THE POINT WHERE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH WOULD DEEPEN FRICTION OVER THE DISPOSITION OF THE CASE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 10995

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. IN THE MEANTIME, THE BASIC OUTLINES OF JAPANESE
POLICY REMAIN UNCHANGED. FONOFF OFFICIALS CONTINUE
TO BELIEVE IN THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THR ROK, AND IN SUPPORT FOR BOTH ROK ECONOMY AND
POSITION IN UN. AT SAME TIME, THEIR BELIEF REMAINS
FIRM THAT KIM DAE-JUNG CASE IS STILL CENTRAL IRRITANT
IN RELATIONSHIP AND MUST BE RESOLVED.

8. IF OUTLINES OF POLICY HAVE NOT CHANGED, HOWEVER,
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT HAS LESSENERED AT LEAST
TEMPORARILY BOTH OFFICIAL LEVERAGE AND PUBLIC PRESSURE
BEHIND JAPANESE DEMANDS ON ROK. SEO
ACKNOWLEDGED, FOR EXAMPPL, THAT AMBASSADOR USHIROKU
WOULD BE "VERY RELUCTANT" TO MAKE STRONG PITCH TO
ROK ON KIM DAE-JUNG FOR SOME TIME TO COME. BY SAME
TOKEN, JAPANESE PUBLIC PRESS AND DIET MAY BE EASIER TO
PERSUADE OF REASONS WHY PRESSURE CANNOT BE APPLIED,
AT LEAST FOR NOW.
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